

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 IO-12 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 RSR-01 /114 W

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R 290346 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9309

INFO USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5142

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF OPPOSITION LEGISLATOR IN THIEU' S

U. S. ENTOURAGE

FOLLOWING MSG REC FROM AMCONSUL NHA TRANG ON MAR 28 ACTION
EMBASSY SAIGON REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 336

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF OPPOSITION LEGISLATOR IN THIEU' S U. S. ENTOURAGE

1. OPPOSITIONIST LOWER HOUSE DEPUTY FROM DALAT, DINH VAN DE,
SPEAKING WITH OUR POLOFF IN DALAT SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE
FOR US WITH GROUP OF LEGISLATORS PRECEDING PRES. THIEU, SAID HE
HOPED THIEU TRIP WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING AMERICAN
SUPPORT AND RECONSTRUCTION AID COMMITMENTS. HE EXPRESSED DIS-
APPOINTMENT, HOWEVER, THAT GVN HAS SO FAR DRAWN UP NO CONCRETE
PLANS FOR RECONSTRUCTION. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE WARNED SOME OF
THIEU' S ADVISORS (NOT IDENTIFIED) THAT US CONGRESS WOULD BE
LEARY OF SUPPORTING RECONSTRUCTION IN GENERAL FOR FEAR THAT
APPROPRIATED FUNDS WOULD BE MISALLOCATED AND STOLEN. DA' S
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COUNSEL TO PALACE WAS THAT GVN PROPOSALS MUST BE "ATTRACTIVE, REALISTIC AND EFFECTIVE."

2. IN ADDITION, DE TOLD POLOFF, US WOULD BE JUSTIFIED IN WITHHOLDING RECONSTRUCTION FUNDS UNTIL IT IS SATISFIED THAT BOTH SIDES ARE RESPECTING PARIS AGREEMENT. COMMUNISTS ARE VIOLATING AGREEMENT MORE HEAVILY THAN GVN, IN DE'S OPINION, BUT GVN'S HANDS ARE NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAN. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE CITED ALLEGED AMBUSH IN TUYEN DUC FEB 25 OF PRG DELEGATES SUPPOSEDLY ENROUTE TO JOIN DALAT FPJMT; DE APPEARED TO ACCEPT PRG ALLEGATION AS FACT AND SAID INCIDENT WAS WIDELY KNOWN AMONG HIS CONSTITUENTS. DE ALSO MENTIONED CURRENT GVN RADIO BROADCASTING, WHICH HE SAID LAMBASTES COMMUNISTS CONSTANTLY, AND ONE PARTICULAR TAPE BEING PLAYED REPEATEDLY ON RADIO THAT JUSTIFIES LAST MONTH'S DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST DRV FPJMC REPS IN HUE AND BAN ME THUOT IN TERMS OF PAST COMMUNIST ATROCITIES.

3. DE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIS DECISION TO JOIN GVN'S POPULAR FRONT AND SERVE AS MEMBER OF FRONT'S NATIONAL PRESIDUM HAD DRAWN SUSPICION OF OPPOSITIONIST ASSEMBLY COLLEAGUES. DE MAINTAINED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS NOT JOINED FRONT'S LOCAL CHAPTER IN DALAT/ TUYEN DUC AND HAS NO INTENTION OF WORKING FOR FRONT THERE. HE DENIED THAT FRONT MEMBERSHIP WAS RELATED TO INVITATION TO JOIN PRESIDENTIAL ENTOURAGE; RATHER, DE SAID, HE WISHED BY HIS PRESENCE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE US THAT GVN, AS A DEMOCRACY, RESPECTS OPPOSITIONISTS SUCH AS HIMSELF.

4. ON OTHER TOPICS, DE SEES POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN SVN AS DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. HE DOUBTS THAT PRESENT SITUATION WILL DETERIORATE INTO OUTRIGHT WAR AGAIN UNLESS GREAT POWERS ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN, E. G., BY CONTINUING TO SUPPLY ARMS TO THE BELLIGERENTS. WHATEVER HAPPENS, DE SAID, HE WOULD NOT FAVOR REINTRODUCTION OF US TROOPS OR RENEWED BOMBING OF NVN. ON DECREE- LAW 060 AND THIEU'S EFFORT TO REDUCE NUMBER OF PARTIES, DE OFFERED VIEW THAT THE GOAL WAS "REASONABLE BUT NOT REALISTIC"; MULTIPLICITY OF NATIONALIST PARTIES HAS DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS IN THE CLANDESTINE POLITICS OF THE FRENCH COLONIAL ERA, AND NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR THIEU TO FORCE COMPLETE HEGEMONY OF DEMOCRACY PARTY. FREE COMPETITION AMONG PARTIES IS NOT ADEQUATE SOLUTION EITHER. DE WOULD ADVOCATE SOME ARRANGEMENT UNDER WHICH THIEU WOULD ASK OTHER NATIONALISTS LIKE VNQDD AND THE VARIOUS DAI VIETS TO "SIT TOGETHER" WITH DP AND WOULD CEDE POWER TO THEM (E. G....) ASSEMBLY SEATS, OR CONTROL OF VILLAGES THROUGH VILLAGE ELECTIONS).
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5. COMMENT: DE LEFT ARVN AFTER TEN YEARS AS A LIEUTENANT COLONEL AND WAS FOR A TIME PROVINCE CHIEF OF BINH THUAN. HE WAS ELECTED TO LOWER HOUSE IN 1967 AND WAS ONE OF FEW SITTING DEPUTIES RE- ELECTED IN 1971, BOTH TIMES WITH AN QUANG BUDDHIST BACKING AND IN 1971 REPORTEDLY OVER THIEU' S PERSONAL OPPOSITION. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT HIS FRONT MEMBERSHIP AND THE US TRIP REPRESENT A " SELL- OUT," BUT CRITICAL VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE MAY BE CONSISTENT HIS ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH INDEPENDENT STANCE OF " CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION" WITHIN THE SYSTEM.

ENGLE

BUNKER

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